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Letter dated 2 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Argentina in August 2013 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) María Cristina **Perceval**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 2 January 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Spanish]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Argentina (August 2013)

Africa

The Sudan and South Sudan/United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

On 7 August, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, presented to the members of the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2013/450) and outlined the latest developments in relations between the Sudan and South Sudan and the parties' compliance with resolution 2046 (2012).

With regard to the development of bilateral relations, he said that, under a proposal submitted and accepted by both countries, an ad hoc investigative mechanism had begun to investigate the accusations by both countries that each supported rebel groups operating in the other's territory. In addition, the mechanism to determine the centre line and allow operationalization of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone had begun its work.

The Sudan had decided to defer the cut-off in the flow of oil for two weeks to allow the mechanisms enough time to finish their investigations and present their findings. However, the Assistant Secretary-General thought it highly unlikely that those mechanisms would be able to finish their work before the end of August.

A meeting of the Joint Security Committee had been held on 30 and 31 July in Juba to address the issue of support for rebel groups and the demilitarization of the border. The parties had agreed once more to end all cross-border support for the rebels and had decided to establish a new bilateral investigative mechanism.

With regard to the situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States and negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North), he said that there had been no progress.

Welcoming the six-month extension of the mandate of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, he again emphasized the need for the Council to express its opinion in order to put pressure on both parties to respect the agreements they had signed.

Council members expressed support for the African Union's communiqué of 29 July, the work of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, and the newly established mechanisms, expressing the hope that those bodies would enable further progress. While Council members welcomed the move by the Sudan to postpone the decision to suspend the flow of oil through its territory, some members regretted that the decision was being used as a threat, while many felt it necessary to end all support for rebel groups.

With regard to Abyei, many Council members expressed concern about the situation in the region and emphasized the importance of resolving differences on the issue; several members stressed that the decision on the final status of Abyei must be mutually acceptable, and some members also said that the proposal of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel of September 2012 should form the basis for resolving the matter. The majority of members stressed the importance of full cooperation with the investigation into the killing of the Ngok Dinka paramount chief on 4 May. Several members emphasized the need to continue to disarm communities in Abyei.

Council members also expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, appealing for an end to hostilities, humanitarian access and a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Some members criticized the activities of SPLM-North and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, while others called on the Sudanese air force to halt attacks on civilian areas.

Several members called for another attempt to be made to agree on the wording of a presidential statement based on the African Union communiqué of 29 July, and several members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Jonglei, South Sudan.

On 22 August, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, Haile Menkeiros, briefed the members of the Security Council in closed consultations on the latest developments in the Sudan and South Sudan and the parties' compliance with resolution 2046 (2012), highlighting the improvement in bilateral relations and anticipating an early September meeting between the two Presidents. In that regard, he noted that President Kiir and his newly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs had announced a new diplomatic strategy towards the Sudan aimed at improving bilateral relations. Subsequently, the Sudan had delayed the decision to stop the flow of oil, allowing the two new investigative mechanisms of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel to continue their operations.

The Joint Security Committee met in Khartoum on 21 August, chaired by the intelligence chiefs of both countries. The meeting was positive, and followed the previous week's meeting of the Ministers of Defence to discuss the agenda for the next meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism.

With regard to the investigation into the killing of the Ngok Dinka paramount chief on 4 May, the Special Envoy said that, following appointments from both capitals, the commission of inquiry had begun its investigation.

With regard to the question of Abyei, he said that the Government of South Sudan insisted that a referendum on the final status of the Area must be held, even though no progress had been made towards establishing transitional institutions or organizing the referendum. Despite the Ngok Dinka community's demands that the referendum should be held in October and the fact that it would be almost impossible to do so for technical reasons, he was concerned that the Misseriya felt they should remain in the area at a time when many Ngok Dinka were also returning from other areas of South Sudan. He explained that the solution to the Abyei conflict was in the hands of the two Presidents alone, and that it would be important for the African Union Peace and Security Council to visit Abyei.

With regard to the situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, he said that fighting continued, as in Darfur and Northern Kordofan, and that humanitarian

agencies were unable to reach those in need of assistance in the rebel-held areas of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile with the population of some 800,000 people. SPLM-North would allow the vaccination campaign to be carried out throughout the Sudan, but only if it was done by the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei with no government presence; Khartoum had yet to respond to that condition. The Special Envoy said that the resumption of negotiations between SPLM-North and the Government of the Sudan was essential to resolving the conflict.

Lastly, the Special Envoy expressed optimism about the improving bilateral relations, but remained concerned by the lack of commitment from both Governments to resolve their own internal conflicts, particularly on the most difficult issues.

As in previous consultations, the majority of Council members welcomed the move by the Sudan to delay the decision to suspend the flow of oil through its territory, although some members regretted that the suspension was inconsistent with the agreements of 27 September 2012 and was being used as a threat. Many Council members once again condemned cross-border support for rebel groups operating in the neighbouring country. Several members also considered that the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone should be implemented as a matter of urgency.

With regard to Abyei, the Council members expressed concern about the situation in the region and emphasized the importance of resolving differences on the issue. Several members stressed that the final status solution for Abyei must be mutually acceptable, and some members also said that the proposal made by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel should form the basis for a settlement. Several members expressed concern about the possibility of unilateral action on the referendum, which could complicate the situation greatly. Most members stressed the importance of full cooperation with the investigation into the killing of the Ngok Dinka leader in May 2013. Several members said it was important that progress should be made in disarming communities in Abyei and that the planned visit to the area by the African Union Peace and Security Council should go ahead.

The Council members also expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, appealing for an end to hostilities, humanitarian access and a negotiated settlement. Some members criticized the activities of SPLM-North and the Sudanese Revolutionary Front, while others called on the Sudanese air force to halt attacks on civilian areas.

Several members called once again for agreement to be reached on the wording of a presidential statement on the Sudan and South Sudan and a press statement on South Sudan, as they were close to being finalized.

Several members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in Jonglei, South Sudan, calling for humanitarian access to be granted as a matter of urgency.

On 23 August, the members of the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/14) in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan" and issued a statement to the press on Jonglei, South Sudan.

On 22 August, in her capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), the representative of Argentina reported to the Council, in accordance with paragraph 3 (a) (iv) of resolution 1591 (2005), about the work of the Committee during the period from 16 May to 21 August 2013.

During that period, the Committee had held informal consultations on two occasions. In the informal consultations of 18 July, the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur, Head of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and Joint Chief Mediator, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, had briefed the Committee on the situation in Darfur, the deteriorating security situation and tribal clashes. He had also outlined the mediation efforts and the obstacles to the peace process in Darfur, and stressed the importance of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, despite the slow progress in implementing some of its aspects. He had also reaffirmed his willingness to support the work of the Committee and its Panel of Experts.

In the consultations held on 16 August, two members of the Panel of Experts had presented the Panel's interim report to the Committee, while two other members had participated by video link in order to answer questions. The four Panel members who had obtained single-entry visas for the Sudan had stayed there for a total of seven weeks and had visited the five states in Darfur.

The Chair of the Committee said that during the introduction of the report, the Panel members had signalled that there had been a change in the motives behind, and a geographic expansion of, the armed violence in Darfur. Clashes on the ground between the Government and armed rebel groups had declined, but the violence of tribal battles to control resources had escalated considerably. The violence was spreading from the east and south of Darfur towards central Darfur, which had led to the displacement of many people and communities. The experts had indicated that the humanitarian situation had worsened and that attacks on humanitarian workers and peacekeepers had intensified, as exemplified by the attack on UNAMID on 13 July.

The Council was also briefed on violations of the sanctions regime by the Government of the Sudan, the investigations under way into possible violations of the travel ban and assets freeze, and potential sources of revenue used by armed rebel groups in order to continue their operations, as well as on the progress made in implementing the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and the obstacles hindering the peace process.

The Chair also reported on the measures adopted with regard to the two recommendations made in the Panel's interim report.

Lastly, she said that, with regard to the proposed visit to Khartoum and Darfur, the updated version of the conditions for the visit had been transmitted to the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations on 20 June 2013. The Committee hoped that the Government of the Sudan would give its consent for the visit to go ahead and would approve the proposed dates.

The Council members, after having commended the work of Argentina as Chair of the Committee, expressed concern about the security situation, the attacks on peacekeepers and the alleged violations of the arms embargo, travel ban and assets freeze. They urged the parties, in particular the non-signatory armed groups,

to join the Doha process, and some members called for sanctions to be imposed on those who obstructed the peace process in Darfur.

Some members welcomed the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with the Panel, while others highlighted the fact that it continued to deny access to the finance expert and stressed the importance of ensuring that all experts had access to the Sudan.

Some members said that they attached prime importance to the pursuit of investigations into the attacks, particularly against UNAMID and into the killing of Commander Mohamed Bashar, and to the identification of those responsible. They also asked the Panel of Experts to submit names for the Committee to consider for inclusion on the sanctions list.

One member commended the evidentiary standards used in the report and expressed concern about the continued use of aviation assets in Darfur. Another asked the Panel of Experts to verify the denial of responsibility by one of the designated individuals.

One member considered that the report under consideration was more balanced than previous reports, while another requested that information on the impact of the situation in Darfur on children should continue to be included.

Some Council members requested additional information about external sources of revenue for armed opposition groups.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

On 14 August, the Council adopted a presidential statement concerning piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (S/PRST/2013/13). The statement expressed the Council's concern about the threat that piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea posed to navigation, security and development in the region, and to the safety of seafarers and commercial maritime routes. The Council also noted with concern the number of incidents and the level of violence of those attacks in the first half of 2013. In the statement, the Council welcomed the holding of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety in the Gulf of Guinea, held in Yaoundé in June, and the documents adopted at that event, including the Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illegal Maritime Activities in West and Central Africa. The Council encouraged all States of the region to implement the Code of Conduct, which defined the regional maritime security strategy.

The Council welcomed the initiatives already taken by States in the region and regional organizations to enhance maritime safety and security. It reiterated the importance of national legal mechanisms to investigate and prosecute those who committed acts of piracy. It also encouraged bilateral and international partners to provide, upon request, support to States and regional organizations to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea.

Lastly, the Council expressed its appreciation for the work of the United Nations Office for Central Africa and the United Nations Office for West Africa in organizing the Summit and requested the Secretary-General to support efforts towards mobilizing the necessary resources for the implementation of the outcomes

of the Summit and to keep it informed of the situation in the Gulf of Guinea and progress made in implementing the outcomes of the Summit.

Central African Republic

On 14 August, in accordance with resolution 2088 (2013), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), Lieutenant-General (retired) Babacar Gaye, introduced the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/470) and briefed the Security Council on the situation in the country. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos; the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović; and the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic, Ambassador Charles-Armel Doubane, also participated in that meeting.

The Special Representative said that there were internal tensions within the Government, led by Michel Djotodia, and that the Government had difficulties controlling the actions of Séléka elements, particularly outside the city of Bangui. The continued human rights violations by Séléka forces and the impunity with which those violations were committed was a cause for concern. Legislation to reorganize the defence forces needed to be adopted, and he cautioned against a plan to integrate Séléka combatants into the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) without prior screening of those who might have committed human rights violations. He supported the efforts of the African Union and the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, and called for the rule of law to be restored in the country.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator agreed that the political situation in the country was fragile: there were continued and worrying human rights violations, and there was an absence of State administration outside Bangui. She warned that the situation could spread to the rest of the Great Lakes region and recalled the large number of refugees who had fled from the Central African Republic to neighbouring countries as a result of the crisis. United Nations facilities, as well as schools and hospitals, had been attacked and looted by Séléka elements. The health-care system was overwhelmed; there were no medicines, health personnel were scarce and there was a high risk of contagious disease outbreaks. The authorities needed to control Séléka forces and thus afford safe access for humanitarian aid.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights gave further details of the human rights violations committed in the Central African Republic and said that, since the March crisis, violence had increased substantially. He also drew attention to the destruction of public registries and said that, while the security situation had improved somewhat in the capital, security was non-existent in the provinces. He called for the urgent restoration of the rule of law, for the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to continue, and for measures to be taken to ease religious tensions and end impunity. He agreed that the mandate of BINUCA should be modified so that it would be better adapted to the current situation, and supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement of former combatants.

The Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic agreed that his country was facing a critical and unprecedented situation. He spoke of the need to

rebuild his country and asked that sanctions should be imposed on human rights violators and that BINUCA should be given a strengthened mandate.

In the closed consultations that followed, the Special Representative requested the reform of the mandate of BINUCA to adapt it to the current situation and to protect Mission personnel. The Council members expressed their willingness to consider the proposal to modify the current mandate of BINUCA in order to adapt it to the needs and current situation in the Central African Republic. They condemned the numerous human rights violations and expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in the country. They also welcomed the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic and called for coordination between the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States. Some Council members expressed doubt about the advisability of imposing sanctions, as had been requested. Lastly, the members stressed the importance of having adequate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement processes in place, of continuing the fight against LRA and of ensuring a peaceful political transition. The Council subsequently issued a statement to the press.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 22 August, following clashes 20 km from Goma, a member of the Security Council requested that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo be discussed under "Other matters" at both the morning and afternoon sessions of the Council's closed consultations. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations was asked to brief the Security Council about those events.

He said that the resumption of hostilities in the North Kivu region had begun on 21 August and had spread in the course of the following days, with clashes between the 23 March Movement (M23) and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) near and around Goma. Those clashes had coincided with the arrival of the new Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Martin Kobler, in the region.

According to reports, MONUSCO forces had been deployed to the area in accordance with the mandate of the Mission to protect civilians.

Shots had been fired at civilians and MONUSCO positions had been attacked, further complicating the humanitarian situation in that area. In addition, a mortar shell had landed on Rwandan territory from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, although at the time of the briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General said that there was no reliable information about who was responsible for the attack. He also informed the Council that one mortar shell landed in the centre of Goma.

The members of the Security Council discussed the situation, expressing concern about the threat that those attacks implied to the civilian population and to United Nations personnel deployed in the area. They also agreed that the Council should continue to monitor developments and that the facts should be investigated, so that the Council could be given the most accurate information possible, enabling it to discuss the matter and take appropriate decisions. The Council members

commended the active steps taken by MONUSCO and some members asked that it should make full use of its strong mandate.

On 29 August, a member of the Security Council requested that informal consultations on the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be held that same day; the consultations took place after the quarterly debate on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). During the consultations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations told the Security Council that the situation around Kibati had worsened in recent days and that fighting had intensified. FARDC had launched an offensive in the Kibati Heights to oust M23 from those positions, from which M23 artillery had been shelling Goma and the airport. MONUSCO forces had participated in those efforts and, following the shelling of Goma and MONUSCO positions by M23, a Tanzanian peacekeeper had been killed and others had been injured.

The members of the Council discussed the situation in the region, commending the actions of MONUSCO and calling for an end to hostilities and for States in the region to comply with the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. Lastly, the Council issued a statement to the press on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

United Nations Mission in Liberia

On 22 August, the Security Council held a meeting with the troop-contributing countries for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIL, Karin Landgren, participated by videoconference from Monrovia and introduced the twenty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL (S/2013/479). The Special Representative recalled that Liberia had enjoyed 10 years of unbroken peace and noted that in June 2013 the first phase of the three-phase troop withdrawal had been completed pursuant to Security Council resolution 2066 (2012), adopted in September 2012. To date, the drawdown had been successful, with two infantry battalions and related enablers repatriated in a timely and orderly fashion. In that same resolution, the Council had approved an increase in the number of formed police units by three additional units, which would bolster the assistance provided by the Mission to specialized units of the Liberia National Police.

The transition was progressing owing to an excellent relationship with the Government. Nonetheless, the transition had revealed serious weaknesses in national capacity to take over security functions from UNMIL. The Mission had closed 11 posts and no longer had a static military presence in four counties. Those areas had remained peaceful thus far, but the fact that national security agencies had not yet succeeded in increasing their presence or operations in those areas raised concerns about the future of the transition. To date, eight of the facilities or camps vacated by UNMIL had been handed over to the Government.

UNMIL continued to monitor the security situation in Liberia. The capacity gap in the Liberian security sector must be addressed to allow for a successful handover of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the national authorities. The Liberia National Police should continue to be institutionally and operationally strengthened. In August, UNMIL and the Liberia National Police would complete a joint assessment of basic capacities nationwide. It was the understanding of the

Special Representative that policy decisions must go hand in hand with implementation and oversight mechanisms, as well as with national and international resources. In the draft national budget for 2013/14, the resources allocated to the Liberia National Police had been reduced. UNMIL would continue to call on the Government to provide security sector institutions with adequate resources to support the transition.

In the context of troop withdrawals, an effective United Nations police presence was more important than ever. Her chief request was that Governments should continue to identify qualified advisers with expertise in the management of financial, technical, logistical and information and communication technology resources.

The Mission had also identified a specific need for more United Nations police advisers with leadership experience, especially women, as increasing attention was being paid to developing the command structures of the Liberia National Police. The 10 formed police units were essential for maintaining stability as the Mission's military strength was reduced, given the nature of threats to the peace in Liberia and the growing need for operational assistance and support for specialized units of the Liberia National Police. The first of the three new formed police units, from Nepal, had been deployed in the field six months earlier. China would deploy a formed police unit in October and it was hoped that a unit from Bangladesh would be deployed in May 2014.

Security along the border with Côte d'Ivoire had improved over the previous year, but was still a cause of concern. In view of potential threats in that area, priority would be given to the Côte d'Ivoire border in deploying the residual force after mid-2015.

The Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire had agreed to strengthen security cooperation. Joint security operations were being planned and were expected to begin in October. Cooperation with other missions in the region had also increased. UNMIL had been requested to provide support for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, including through the use of strategic air assets such as the Mi-24 helicopters maintained jointly by UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

It was necessary to maintain a high level of trust in the credibility and integrity of UNMIL among the population. That meant, among other things, strict adherence to the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Allegations of abuse tarnished the reputation of the Mission and the United Nations and undermined the personal dignity of peacekeepers.

The Special Representative attached great importance to the well-being and morale of uniformed and civilian personnel and encouraged discussion of conditions in the field. She relied on the troop-contributing countries to ensure the accountability of their troops by informing them prior to deployment about the United Nations policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and other types of misconduct, and by taking prompt and appropriate action in cases of misconduct. She hoped that the Mission would be informed of the outcome of disciplinary actions, as that could serve as a deterrent and help to build the trust of the local community.

Lastly, she reiterated her commitment to implementing the United Nations human rights-based personnel selection policy in UNMIL. She was drawing up an integrated strategy for implementing the human rights due diligence policy and had informed the Government of Liberia of the Organization's obligation to uphold those.

Americas

Haiti

On 26 August, the Security Council held a meeting with the countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of MINUSTAH, Sandra Honoré, who was meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries for the first time since taking up her functions on 15 July 2013, was accompanied by the Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier-General Gabriel Guerrero, and the Police Commissioner, Luis Miguel Carrilho.

The Special Representative said that since the submission of the previous report in March 2013 (S/2013/139), limited progress had been made, despite the efforts of the Government, in organizing the long-overdue partial senatorial, municipal and local elections. Given the delays in the establishment of the Electoral Council and in the adoption and promulgation of the electoral law, it was increasingly unlikely that the elections would be held in 2013.

The commitment to supporting the democratic process in Haiti through institution-building was a central focus of the Mission, as Haiti could not be stabilized if there was no continuity in key political institutions and if it lacked a legal framework to underpin government programmes.

The security situation had remained relatively stable, with a relative decrease in crimes and demonstrations compared with the same period in 2012. Demonstrations had occurred, but had been mostly linked to socioeconomic grievances such as food insecurity and the lack of basic services, and had been peaceful. The Port-au-Prince metropolitan area continued to pose the greatest challenges in that regard.

The progress made in terms of security attested to the improvement in the Haitian National Police, which had assumed increased responsibility for the provision of internal security, particularly in the 4 of the country's 10 regions vacated by the MINUSTAH military component. Operations led by the national police and supported by MINUSTAH had focused on combating gangs and criminal violence, mainly in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area. The development of the national police was vital to the success of the Mission and to stability in Haiti. The MINUSTAH police component accordingly continued to support the implementation of the 2012-2016 National Police Development Plan. Despite the significant contributions made by bilateral partners to the police development plan, resources were still insufficient to reach all of the plan's objectives. More diversified technical experience among the Mission's civilian and police personnel was needed in order to support the development of the administrative capacity of the national police.

With respect to the humanitarian situation, she acknowledged that Haiti continued to face significant challenges concerning food insecurity and cholera. The

United Nations continued to support the Government of Haiti in various short- and long-term priorities aimed at stopping the spread of cholera in the country.

Regarding the review of the Mission's impact and authorized strength, she had met several times with the President, Michel Martelly, and the Prime Minister, Laurent Lamothe, to consider the consolidation plan and its four stabilization benchmarks. Both of those officials had expressed support for a consolidation plan for the Mission as the capacities of national institutions gained strength. In April, a joint Government/MINUSTAH working group had been established to monitor the gradual and orderly transfer of responsibilities to the Government.

In accordance with resolution 2070 (2012), a total of 1,070 military personnel had been withdrawn by 30 June 2013, leaving an authorized field presence of 6,270 personnel. In addition, the number of police personnel had been reduced by 640, leaving an authorized strength of 2,601.

As the police training programme was proceeding according to plan and the security situation had shown signs of progressive improvement, the Secretary-General had recommended that the Security Council should consider a further reduction of the Mission's military strength from 6,270 to 5,021. The Special Representative said that in implementing this drawdown, due consideration should be given to maintaining the military engineering capacity at its current strength to continue assisting the infrastructure efforts of the Government for the elimination of cholera in Haiti.

Lastly, the Special Representative highlighted the efforts made by the troop- and police-contributing countries to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel in Haiti and to act on reports of such cases. She reiterated her commitment to the zero-tolerance policy in that regard.

On 28 August, the Security Council met to consider "The question concerning Haiti". Participating in the meeting, along with the Council members and the Permanent Representative of Haiti, were the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

At that meeting, the Special Representative introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2013/493) and indicated that the overall security situation in Haiti had remained relatively stable, with a decrease in civil unrest and major crimes. While statistics showed a downward trend in homicides, kidnappings and incidents of violent civil unrest in the first half of the year compared with the same period in 2012, there had been an increase in the number of politically motivated protests linking socioeconomic grievances with broader anti-Government messages, including dissatisfaction with the ongoing electoral stalemate.

She noted that, with the support of United Nations police, the performance of the Haitian National Police had improved as it had assumed increased responsibility for the provision of internal security, particularly in the 4 of the country's 10 regions vacated by the MINUSTAH military component. Nevertheless, the military and police components of MINUSTAH continued to play an important role in supporting the national police in maintaining overall security and stability.

With regard to the political situation, she said that the continued delay in the holding of the partial senatorial, municipal and local elections was of increasing

concern and posed a series of risks to the stabilization process. The submission to Parliament of the draft electoral law by President Martelly, a necessary step in launching the electoral process, was a welcome development. At the same time, there had been protracted delays, caused in part by the eight months that it had taken the three branches of Government to designate the nine members of the Electoral Council, which had finally been established in April 2013, followed by the delayed submission of the draft law by the Electoral Council to the executive branch and by the latter to Parliament.

If the provisions of the 2008 electoral law were implemented and the senatorial elections were not held by January 2014, the Senate and, by extension, the Parliament could become ineffective, resulting in a genuine setback in the democratic process in Haiti.

Regarding the consolidation of MINUSTAH, the Special Representative said that the military and police components had completed the reduction mandated by resolution 2070 (2012). The Mission stood ready to make further adjustments in personnel strength if the Council so decided in October.

With respect to cholera, she said that, as at 29 June, the epidemic had caused the deaths of 8,173 people and infected more than 660,000. She regretted that the donations pledged thus far amounted to only 47 per cent of the budget of the national plan for the elimination of cholera.

President Martelly and Prime Minister Lamothe had expressed support for the phased withdrawal of the Mission as the capacity of national institutions increased.

Regarding police development benchmarks, the Special Representative reiterated that achieving the targets of the 2012-2016 National Police Development Plan would require the continued commitment of the Government and Member States to ensure that appropriate funding was made available to support a professional, reliable and accountable police force.

Concerning respect for the rule of law, she said that, while the oversight and accountability mechanisms provided for in the Constitution had been established, it was critical that the Government and its international partners should continue to build the capacity of those institutions.

In connection with the Mission's governance benchmarks, MINUSTAH had concentrated its good offices efforts on promoting dialogue among national stakeholders to overcome the electoral stalemate. The strained relations between the executive and legislative branches had impeded the adoption of a consensual legislative agenda, a key governance indicator, and that situation had impaired progress on crucial legislative reforms, such as the law against money-laundering, the law on the financing of political parties and the revision of the criminal code and criminal procedure code.

Haiti was at a critical juncture, in which the progress made in the areas of security and stabilization, as well as the concerted efforts of the Martelly/Lamothe Administration to promote socioeconomic development, could be jeopardized by the instability resulting from the polarization linked to the electoral stalemate.

The Council members agreed that the delay in the holding of municipal and senatorial elections was a matter of concern and that priority should be given to strengthening the capacity of the Haitian National Police. At the same time, the

Council members recognized the positive steps taken by the Government of Haiti, such as the establishment of the transitional Electoral Council and Haiti's assumption of the chairmanship of the Caribbean Community.

Some members said that the delay in holding the elections would have a negative impact on the next set of elections in 2014, undermine the ongoing democratic process and adversely affect economic goals.

In addition, the Council members expressed continued concern about the humanitarian situation, the resettlement of displaced persons and sanitation in the camps. Several members urged greater coordination and cohesion among different actors engaged in humanitarian work and said that it was imperative to continue to provide funds and expertise to the country.

Several members said that they were in favour of renewing the mandate of MINUSTAH for an additional year, in view of its contribution to the achievement of progressive and significant improvements in the country.

All the members of the Council supported the Secretary-General's conditions-based consolidation plan for MINUSTAH and his recommendation for the withdrawal of additional military elements, provided that conditions on the ground so allowed. Some delegations cautioned that any reconfiguration or drawdown of MINUSTAH should not lead to the reversal of gains made in the country and that there should be a gradual and orderly transfer of responsibilities to the Government of Haiti. Several members stressed that any reconfiguration must be approached carefully, with regard to the real possibility that new security risks could develop during the electoral period.

There was also agreement on the need to maintain capacity-building of the Haitian National Police as the Mission's highest priority, in order to improve its performance and sustain security gains. Some members emphasized the importance of recruitment and retention efforts, with a focus on recruiting women and expert personnel. Several members said that MINUSTAH should continue to address the problem of sexual and gender-based violence, among other issues, by training the police to prevent and respond to such crimes.

The Permanent Representative of Haiti said that his country was at a unique and undoubtedly decisive moment in its history, in which it sought to strengthen its democratic institutions while working relentlessly to re-establish growth and finally commit to a path of economic resurgence and sustainable development. Over the previous two years, significant advances and notable and indisputable progress had been made in all areas: institutional, socioeconomic, cultural and security. However, the task was immense, the challenges were great and the obstacles were formidable.

While he welcomed the fact that Haiti, in the view of the Security Council, no longer constituted a threat or a danger to international peace and security in the region, he believed it was necessary to launch and deepen consideration of the post-MINUSTAH period. As had been emphasized in the Secretary-General's report, voices were being raised in the country to call into question the presence of MINUSTAH. All possible scenarios for disengagement should be considered in order to avoid a repetition of history.

Asia and Middle East

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 20 August, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernández-Taranco, reported to the Council at an open briefing on the situation in the Middle East. The briefing was followed by consultations of the whole.

The Assistant Secretary-General said that progress on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could have a positive impact on regional stability and that that aim had become more critical in recent weeks against the backdrop of troubling developments elsewhere in the region. Efforts led by the United States Secretary of State in recent months had culminated in a series of preparatory meetings between the negotiators in Washington, D.C., on 29 and 30 July, which had been followed by a first formal round of talks in Jerusalem on 14 August and subsequent talks in the region. Quartet envoys intended to meet soon to discuss next steps. Against that background, the Secretary-General had travelled to the region — to Jordan, Palestine and Israel — on 15 and 16 August to lend his personal support to the leaders on both sides. On that occasion, the Secretary-General had said that he was heartened by the bold decision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to embark on direct dialogue, which remained the single most credible path to a solution and the only way through which Palestinians could realize their rightful aspirations to an independent and viable Palestinian State, and Israelis could meet their legitimate security needs. In order for those negotiations to have a chance at success, they must be meaningful, with a clear political horizon, and yield early dividends in the immediate period ahead. Both sides needed to sustain an environment conducive to the advancement of the peace process. There must be visible improvements in the situation on the ground and the parties must refrain from actions that could risk undermining prospects during the negotiations.

The Secretary-General had welcomed the Israeli Cabinet's decision to release prisoners incarcerated prior to the Oslo Accords, but said that he remained deeply troubled by Israel's continuing settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reiterating that the position of the United Nations that settlements were against international law remained firm. In conclusion, he said that the time had come to translate the collective call for action into a shared sense of urgency, as leaders on both sides must realize that they had an opening that they could not afford to lose. The Secretary-General and the United Nations, together with the Quartet, would continue to provide all possible support to their efforts.

In the ensuing consultations of the whole, the Council members hailed the resumption of negotiations between the parties. In view of the great challenges that still stood in the way of a definitive solution, some members acknowledged that they viewed the recent progress with cautious optimism, while others called for an outcome that would surprise the sceptics. The Council members agreed that the negotiations must be accompanied by confidence-building measures to create an environment conducive to dialogue. Thus, while some members welcomed the release of 26 "pre-Oslo" Palestinian prisoners, several expressed concern about Israel's uninterrupted settlement activity.

Lebanon

On 15 August, the Security Council issued a statement to the press, in which it strongly condemned the terrorist attack committed that same day in South Beirut, which had killed at least 10 people and wounded more than 100 (according to figures available at the time). On 23 August, the Council issued another statement to the press, in which it strongly condemned the attacks that had occurred that same day in Tripoli, killing at least 42 people and wounding more than 400. In both statements, the members of the Security Council reaffirmed the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and all obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. It also appealed to all Lebanese people to preserve national unity in the face of attempts to undermine the country's stability and stressed the importance for all Lebanese parties to respect Lebanon's policy of disassociation and to refrain from any involvement in the Syrian crisis, consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration.

On 20 August, in his open briefing before the Council, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that the relative calm during the reporting period had ended tragically with the bomb explosion on 15 August in the Beirut suburb of Rouweiss, and referred to other attacks that had been discovered in the planning stage, before they could be carried out. He also noted that the Syrian crisis continued to affect Lebanon's stability, especially in the border areas.

In the ensuing consultations of the whole, several Council members reiterated their concern about the destabilizing effects of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and reaffirmed their support for Lebanon's disassociation policy. Some members also recognized the efforts of the Lebanese people and Government to cope with the influx of refugees fleeing that conflict and said that it was essential for the international community to share the burden of those efforts.

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

On 14 August, the Security Council held a meeting with the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

On 22 August, the Security Council held consultations on UNIFIL. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations observed that the UNIFIL area of operations had remained calm and that the Force continued to play a crucial role in ensuring stability in southern Lebanon. He also highlighted the positive impact of coordination and liaison arrangements in that regard. However, the situation was fragile as a result of regional volatility and encroachments on Lebanese sovereignty.

The Council members called on the parties to make progress on pending issues pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006) and expressed support for the renewal of the UNIFIL mandate, as requested by the Government of Lebanon and recommended by the Secretary-General in his letter of 31 July 2013 (S/2013/457). Several members expressed concern about the repercussions of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and reaffirmed the importance of respecting the disassociation policy.

On 29 August, the Security Council adopted resolution 2115 (2013) extending the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2014.

Middle East

On 15 August, the Security Council held consultations on the situation in Egypt. The Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, reported that the situation in that country was extremely volatile following the violent crackdown on 14 August to disperse the camps set up by protesters supporting the deposed President, Mohamed Morsi, adding that there had been uprisings in many cities. He said that those episodes showed that moderate positions were losing ground and reduced the chances of reconciliation, and warned that there was a high risk of further clashes. Lastly, he said that it was imperative to end the violence, establish genuine dialogue and restore the rule of law.

The Council members regretted the loss of life and agreed that the violence must be ended immediately and that all parties must exercise maximum restraint and resume the path of dialogue in order to find a political solution to the country's current situation. The Council members directed the President to report those views to the press as aspects on which there had been wide agreement during the consultations.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 20 August, in his open briefing before the Council, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that the bloodshed in the Syrian Arab Republic continued unabated, government forces continued to use indiscriminate shelling and air strikes against densely populated areas, and armed opposition groups also continued to fail in their obligation to protect civilians. Military confrontations and displacement throughout the country along sectarian lines threatened to further unravel the social fabric of Syrian society, and the continued influx of foreign fighters exacerbated sectarian and ethnic tensions and must be brought to an end. In relation to the humanitarian situation, he said that access to those in need continued to be a challenge and that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners counted on the Security Council to assist in facilitating access to all those in need inside the Syrian Arab Republic and in neighbouring countries. He recalled the Secretary-General's position that there was no military solution to the conflict and that a political solution was urgently needed. In that regard, the Organization continued to do its best to ensure that the Geneva Conference on the Syrian Arab Republic took place as soon as possible. Moreover, the United Nations mission to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, led by Åke Sellström, had arrived in Damascus on Sunday, 18 August, and had begun its work the following day for a period of 14 days in Khan Al-Asal and two other places where the alleged use of chemical weapons had been reported by Member States.

In the ensuing consultations, all members reiterated the need for a political solution to the conflict. To that end, several members said that preparations for the second Geneva Conference should be expedited so that the Conference could be held as soon as possible. Most members continued to express concern about the deterioration in the humanitarian and human rights situation, and some of them said that the Council could address the humanitarian situation by taking into account the recommendations which the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had circulated previously to the Council. Lastly, several Council members

welcomed the fact that the team established to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons was already carrying out its work in Syrian territory.

On 21 August, the Security Council held consultations in response to allegations that chemical weapons had been used that day in the Ghouta area in the suburbs of Damascus. On that occasion, the Deputy Secretary-General said that reports on those allegations had been received and that the Secretariat had been unable to verify or confirm the information, although violent clashes were known to have taken place in the area. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had denied the allegations against it, and the team headed by Mr. Sellström was in contact with the Syrian authorities to discuss all allegations of chemical weapons use, including those made that same day. He also confirmed the Secretary-General's commitment to fulfil the mandate to investigate any allegations that were brought to his attention by any Member State, and said that requests from several Governments for an urgent investigation in that regard had been received that same afternoon. He concluded by noting that the consent of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the cooperation of all parties on the ground were necessary in order to allow the latest allegations to be investigated; in that context, all parties should be called upon to observe a ceasefire to allow the team to gain access.

The Council members expressed deep concern at the allegations, reiterated that the use of chemical weapons was contrary to international law and said that it was necessary to shed light on what had occurred. Accordingly, they supported the Secretary-General's determination to carry out a thorough, impartial and prompt investigation. The Council members also expressed their condolences to the victims and their sympathy to the victims' families, and underscored the need to provide immediate assistance to the affected population. The Council members directed the President to report those views to the press as aspects on which there had been wide agreement during the consultations.

Several members also said that the team of investigators already working in Syrian territory should be authorized to visit the sites where the attack had allegedly occurred and that all parties should be called upon to afford the team safe, complete and unimpeded access.

Afghanistan

On 5 August, the Security Council issued a statement to the press, in which it condemned in the strongest terms the suicide attack on 3 August near the Indian consulate in Jalalabad, which had resulted in multiple civilian deaths and injuries, mostly children, and had killed Afghan security personnel. The members of the Council reiterated their serious concern at the threats posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and illegal armed groups. The members of the Council condemned acts of violence against diplomatic and consular representatives and reiterated that no terrorist act could reverse the path towards Afghan-led peace, democracy and stability in Afghanistan, which was supported by the people and Government of Afghanistan and the international community.

Europe

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

On 29 August, the Security Council held a meeting on UNMIK, at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Farid Zarif, introduced by video teleconference the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the Mission (S/2013/444). In his statement, he highlighted the main points of the report, in particular the progress made towards the implementation of the agreement reached between Belgrade and Pristina on 19 April 2013 and their commitment to observe the agreed timetable, notwithstanding some complications in the process. Such progress remained fundamental to building mutual trust and realizing the key aspirations of both sides, the population in Kosovo and the entire region. In order for political cooperation to be fully effective, it must be accompanied by a vigorous, sustained and consistent ground effort by the mandated international presences and local leaders. He reaffirmed the Mission's commitment to continue to carry out its mandate and to step up operational coordination with its international partners to help in ensuring that the political process was reflected in realities on the ground.

He referred to the preparations for holding local elections in Kosovo on 3 November and noted that the registration of political entities in the short time window for the elections was a challenge. He also noted the swift response of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to facilitate voting by eligible internally displaced persons. He underscored the importance of full participation by voters, particularly in the northern municipalities, and called on the parties to show steadfastness and flexibility in order to address the concerns of the local population effectively and overcome the uncertainty currently prevailing in the north. He also referred to the existing situation in the north with regard to the implementation of the agreement, acknowledging the confidence-building efforts being made and indicating that the Mission would continue to adapt its activities in the field in order to support the political process and related work on the ground effectively, enhancing its facilitation and mediation roles and continuing the role of the UNMIK Administration in Mitrovica.

He made special mention of the need to determine the fate of persons missing since the time of the conflict, given the scant progress made in recent months despite the joint efforts of the Kosovo-Albanian and Serb associations of relatives of missing persons. While the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo was prepared to undertake new investigations, within its mandate and means, it could not succeed in that task without additional information from all concerned. Achieving greater success in that regard would require the exertion of renewed political will to encourage the provision of more information and of adequate witness protection. He then referred to the steps being taken to safeguard religious and cultural sites in Kosovo and the visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which had served to underscore issues that had led to recommendations on remedies for weak legislation, more vigorous implementation of the law and tougher responses to instances of hate speech and ethnic intolerance.

Statements were also made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivan Mrkić, and by Enver Hoxhaj, from Kosovo, both of whom confirmed their commitment to the political dialogue facilitated by the European Union. The

Council members welcomed the progress made and expressed support for the ongoing process of dialogue. Some members expressed concern about the fragile security situation throughout Kosovo. Several Council members reaffirmed their support for the investigation of cases of organ trafficking in Kosovo and of the fate of missing persons. They also thanked UNMIK for its work in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999) and requested UNMIK to continue to fulfil its mandate in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Other matters

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 7 August, the Security Council held consultations on the quarterly report on the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), concerning measures imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Sylvie Lucas, introduced the report and indicated that the Committee had held informal consultations on three occasions (31 May, 1 July and 31 July) and would continue to carry out its work using the no-objection procedure.

She said that, in the consultations of 31 May, the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts, Martin Uden, had introduced the final report for 2013, which had subsequently been issued as an official document (S/2013/337). The Coordinator had said that the Panel's efforts had focused on the investigation of cases of non-compliance with Security Council resolutions and on the provision of assistance to Member States in implementing those resolutions. Several members of the Committee had expressed concern about the elaborate methods used by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to circumvent the sanctions and about its continuing development of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. Some members had also stressed the importance of making the Panel's report public, while others had reiterated the need for the Panel to continue working within its mandate and under the Committee's direction.

The Committee had continued its consideration of the final report of the Panel of Experts in its consultations of 1 and 31 July, in which it had analysed the report's recommendations in detail. The Committee was still considering those recommendations, and would, in the coming weeks, turn its attention to the steps that could be taken to implement those recommendations that were widely supported by the Committee members.

On 17 July the Committee had received a note from the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations reporting that Panamanian authorities had inspected the vessel *Chong Chon Gang*, flying the flag of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and were requesting assistance from the Committee and the Panel of Experts. According to the Panamanian authorities, the ship had been transporting items which, based on a preliminary analysis, could be subject to the measures imposed by resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009). At the invitation of the Government of Panama, the Panel of Experts had visited that country from 13 to 15 August to investigate the incident. In its consultations of 31 July, the Committee had held a preliminary exchange of views on the matter and had received information on the visit from the Coordinator of the Panel of Experts. The Committee members had praised Panama for reporting the incident promptly and for its cooperation with the

Panel of Experts, and had welcomed Cuba's expressions of willingness to cooperate. The Coordinator had said that the Panel would submit a preliminary report on its findings following its return from Panama.

In addition, to promote transparency with respect to the other Members of the United Nations, on 19 June the Committee had held an open briefing on its work, at which it had highlighted the assistance that it could provide to Member States in the implementation of resolutions and the submission of national reports. In follow-up to resolutions 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013), the Committee had adopted a summary of the main provisions of Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to give Member States an overview of their obligations.

The Committee had also adopted an implementation assistance notice on luxury goods and was currently updating the notice on the submission of national reports. Moreover, the Committee was considering an implementation assistance notice on the disposal of confiscated goods and another on the comprehensive provision contained in paragraph 22 of resolution 2094 (2013). Lastly, the Chair said that the Committee was considering possible follow-up action, including the preparation of an implementation assistance notice, in relation to the report of the Panel of Experts on the difficulties encountered by some diplomatic missions in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. She also reported that, in order to assist Member States in identifying individuals and entities subject to the travel ban and assets freeze, the Committee was considering the possibility of adding the original-language versions of the names to the sanctions list.

The Committee had adopted its programme of work for the period from 1 May 2013 to 30 April 2014. Lastly, she recalled that Neil Watts (South Africa), an expert on maritime transportation, had joined the Panel of Experts on 10 July.

Following the introduction of the report, several members of the Council referred to the final report of the Panel of Experts and said that they hoped that the Committee would continue to consider it in a constructive manner in order to reach consensus on the recommendations. Other members encouraged the Committee to take further actions, in particular the adoption of new measures related to the recommendations of the Panel of Experts in its final report.

With respect to the incident concerning the vessel *Chong Chon Gang*, the Council members highlighted the swift actions taken by Panama in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. Some members also highlighted the statement made by the Cuban authorities on their willingness to cooperate with the Council and the Committee. Some members stressed that the Committee would need to take appropriate action in response to any violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. Some members reiterated the importance of ensuring that cases of sanctions violations were investigated on the basis of sound evidence.

The Council members reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue, including in the form of the six-party talks to resolve the issue, and stressed the importance of unity in the Council and compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its obligations. Some members emphasized that dialogue should be authentic and credible. Some members recalled that the sanctions should be aligned with the broader aim of resuming negotiations. Several members reaffirmed their strong commitment to peace and stability on the peninsula. Some Council members noted

the decrease in tensions, and referred to the importance of reopening the Kaesong industrial complex.

Furthermore, some Council members restated their position that the implementation of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should not impede the work of diplomatic missions in that country. In addition, some members referred to the open briefing held by the Committee for Member States on 19 June, and said that they supported the intention of the Committee Chair to continue to hold such briefings in the future.

High-level open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

On 6 August, an open debate was held on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. The President of Argentina, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, served as President of the meeting.

Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the representatives of Armenia, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Germany, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam were invited to participate in the meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States and the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations were invited to participate in the meeting.

Briefings were given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, in his capacity as President pro tempore of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC); the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, Tekeda Alemu, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the African Union; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, Eda Rivas Franchini, speaking on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR); and the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States, Ahmed Fathalla. This was the first meeting at which the Security Council was briefed by CELAC and UNASUR.

Before giving the floor to the Secretary-General, the President of Argentina recalled that the last time the Security Council had held a broad-based debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations had been in January 2010 under the presidency of China, and that the outcome of that debate had been the adoption of a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/1) in which, while emphasizing the primacy of the Council in maintaining international peace and security, the Council had stressed the importance of developing effective partnerships.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, the President indicated that the members of the Council were in agreement with the presidential statement to be issued as document S/PRST/2013/12.

The Secretary-General and the four briefers referred to the continued effectiveness, relevance and importance of Chapter VIII of the Charter, while also highlighting the challenges that often arose in cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, and commenting on various regional experiences.

Following the initial presentations, Council members also emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional partners in a wide variety of fields, and highlighting the complementarity among the roles played by regional organizations and the United Nations in responding to threats to peace and security and detailing the specific characteristics and various challenges of cooperation in each region.

Several members stressed the importance of the annual consultative meeting between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, noting that the experience of the relationship with the African Union was interesting and could serve as a guide for other regional experiences. Several members noted the importance of continuing to address the issue of insufficient funding and resources to build the capacity of the African Union, while others deemed it important to avoid the temptation to overly codify such relationships, which should focus on practical action.

Some members considered that the respective roles of the organizations should be based on comparative advantages and that organizations at all levels should benefit from best practices.

Some members welcomed the fact that the Council, in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/12), emphasized that ending impunity was essential in the efforts of a conflict and post-conflict society to come to terms with past wrongs and that regional and subregional organizations should contribute to accountability.

Several members said that they appreciated the fact that the presidential statement highlighted the fight against impunity and noted the historic importance in that regard of the International Criminal Court, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law, and the role that regional organizations played in those areas.

Some members stressed that the Council, in the presidential statement, embraced close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations on thematic issues and recognized that regional organizations had a crucial role in addressing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. They also welcomed the fact that the Council, in the presidential statement, reiterated the call made in the presidential statement of 17 June on children and armed conflict (S/PRST/2013/8) for regional organizations to include the protection of children in their policies, programmes and planning activities and to assign child protection specialists to their field missions.

Participating in the debate were 13 Ministers for Foreign Affairs: in addition to the Council members that were represented at the ministerial level (Azerbaijan, Guatemala and Morocco), the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Haiti, Peru, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela made statements, and many of the other States Members of the United Nations were represented.

Open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 19 August the Security Council held an open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The presidency had produced a concept note on the subject (S/2013/447). Ambassador Susana Ruiz Cerutti, Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, presided over the debate.

Briefings were given by the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Director for International Law and Cooperation, Philip Spoerri.

The Secretary-General referred to the dedication of humanitarian workers, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad. Attacking humanitarian workers was a violation of international law and a war crime. He was concerned about the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effect in populated areas. He also referred to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said that she welcomed the Organization's increasing use of international commissions of inquiry to investigate violations in conflict situations. The High Commissioner said that providing humanitarian access and ensuring accountability for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were obligations grounded in international law. Member States and the United Nations should make concerted efforts to ensure that the protection of civilians integrates, in a complimentary and mutually reinforcing manner, humanitarian access and full respect for the norms of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee laws. She referred to the situations in the Central African Republic, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan, the Gaza Strip and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said, with respect to the Council's role, that since the Secretary-General first identified those challenges in 2009, the Council had taken some important steps to implement its commitment to protect civilians. Peacekeeping operations had been given more consistent mandates and situations had been referred to the International Criminal Court. She urged the Council to use more consistently all the tools at its disposal to better protect civilians. She highlighted the need to consider measures to prevent and mitigate the humanitarian impact of the use in populated areas of explosive weapons, which were by their nature indiscriminate within their areas of blast and fragmentation, and the need to strengthen the protection of civilians from their effects. She stressed the role of fact-finding and accountability, as well as the need to allow and facilitate the immediate free passage of all medical supplies. She referred in particular to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan.

The ICRC Director for International Law and Cooperation said that the reality on the ground continued to reflect a dire lack of protection, with situations that were nothing short of catastrophic. The most critical challenge was the need to improve respect for international humanitarian law by States and non-State armed groups, including strengthened accountability for violations of international humanitarian

law. He expressed alarm at the attacks against humanitarian personnel, especially health-care workers. He stressed the need for States to ratify the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty.

In addition to the Council members, 37 Member States and one observer took part in the open debate. Both members and non-members of the Council reiterated their concern at the fact that civilians still accounted for the majority of the victims of armed conflict. They stressed the necessity to improve compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Many delegations stressed that the protection of civilians was a matter of primary responsibility for the States and urged the parties to armed conflicts to observe those norms in full. Underlining that the lack of access to humanitarian assistance had a devastating impact on populations in need, many delegations stressed that unfettered access to such assistance was imperative. The fact that the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and basic humanitarian principles must be respected was also stressed. The Council members had sought to combat impunity for grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and several delegations highlighted the role of the International Criminal Court in combating impunity and deterring violations. Many delegations noted that the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty represented a contribution to the protection of civilians. All the participants made reference to the commemoration, on 19 August, of World Humanitarian Day.

Annual memorial service in memory of the staff who lost their lives in the Baghdad bombing on 19 August 2003, as well as the United Nations personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty between September 2012 and June 2013

On Monday, 19 August, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, the annual memorial service in memory of the staff who lost their lives in the Baghdad bombing on 19 August 2003, as well as the United Nations personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty between September 2012 and June 2013 was held, with a special tribute to fallen staff and survivors of the 2003 Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad, in which 22 people were killed and 100 were wounded. The President was invited to take part in the ceremony and to make remarks.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507) (wrap-up session)

On 29 August, the Security Council held a private meeting on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507) (wrap-up session). States not members of the Council were invited to participate in the meeting as observers. In total, 69 non-Council members participated as observers. The aim of the meeting was to hold an exchange of views on the Council's contribution in August to the fulfilment of its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, to assess its effectiveness, to draw lessons and conclusions from its activities over the past month and to discuss ways of improving its approach to the future consideration of the items included on its August agenda.